

HABS No. AZ-159-B

Tucson Plant Materials Center, Administration
Building (Building No. 1)
3241 North Romero Road
Tucson
Pima County
Arizona

HABS
ARIZ
10-TUCSO,
32B-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

**Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Western Region
Department of the Interior
San Francisco, California 94107**

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY

**TUCSON PLANT MATERIALS CENTER
ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
(BUILDING NO. 1)**

HABS AZ-159-B

Location: The building is located at 3241 North Romero Road, Tucson, Arizona
Pima County, Arizona

USGS Jaynes Quadrangle (7'5), Universal
Transverse Mercator Coordinates: Z E N
 12 499690 3569760

Present Owner: United States Department of Agriculture
Soil Conservation Service

Present Use: Offices / Laboratory

Significance: The Administration Building, located at the historic building complex of the Tucson Plant Materials Center, is significant for its association with the initial construction and development of the first soil conservation nursery established in Arizona by the Soil Conservation Service. The Tucson Nursery represents one of the first group of 48 soil conservation nurseries built by the Soil Conservation Service from the beginning of 1935 through June, 1936. Completed in July, 1935, the Administration Building was the first of eight original buildings constructed at the complex. It functioned as administrative offices for the plant materials center and as the laboratory for experimentation and propagation of plant species. The Administration Building is among the four remaining historic buildings at the site.

Part I. Descriptive Information

A. Physical Description

The Administration Building is a large structure originally used as offices and laboratories for the Tucson Nursery. It is a detached building located within a closely grouped complex of historic and contemporary buildings. The Administration Building is situated at the east edge of the building complex and faces Romero Road. A large grass lawn, approximately 100 feet deep, extends between the building and Romero Road. The south side of the building is landscaped with a lawn and numerous specimen plants. The area north of the building contains agricultural plots used for observational plantings. For a physical description and historic context of the Tucson Plant Materials Center, see HABS No. AZ-159.

The Administration Building is a one-story "U" shaped building measuring 70 feet wide by 75 feet deep. The width of each ell is 20 feet. The rear courtyard formed by the two opposing wings is 30 feet wide by 55 feet deep. It is enclosed on the west by a low wall with a central entrance. It is landscaped with a grass lawn and contains two *Washingtonia Arizona* which were grown from seeds collected in Palm Canyon, Arizona, and transplanted in January, 1936, by Howard R. Benham. The building's air conditioning equipment is located on a 11 X 16 foot concrete slab in the southeast corner of the courtyard.

The building is constructed of adobe brick walls, one foot thick, which are built on concrete foundations and fired brick stem walls. The exterior of the adobe walls are finished with pebble-dashed Portland cement plaster. The building is covered by a flat roof hidden behind low parapets. False wood vigas, approximately three feet on center, are located below all parapets.

The front elevation faces east and is symmetrical about a central entrance. The facade is composed of three bays, with the central bay demarcated by a stepped parapet and a low wall surrounding a 24 foot wide entrance courtyard. Each bay contains two evenly located steel casement windows. The windows, which are used throughout the building, are three feet wide by five feet high with two, four light leaves and a two light fixed top light. The central door has been replaced with a flush wood door and the original side lights are infilled with plywood.

The north and south walls also feature steel casement windows. One window, located near the center of the south wall, was converted to a door between 1963 and 1965. An original paired doorway at the west end of the south wall has been infilled and an exhaust motor and fan housing, resting on a concrete block wall has been installed.

The west walls of the two wings each contain centrally located doorways. The original paired flushed doors at the south wing still remain. The single leaf door at the north wing has also been replaced with a flush door.

Access to the building from the courtyard is through a central door on the west wall. A second

entrance to the building from the courtyard is located off center on the south wall of the north wing. Both original doors have been replaced with flush solid core wood doors. Each of the three courtyard walls also contain steel sash casement windows. With the exception of two small bathroom windows, all the windows are of the standard size used in the remainder of the building.

A small basement, measuring 12 feet deep by 19 feet wide is located near the center of the main portion of the building. Exterior access to the basement is by way of a series of concrete steps located in the northeast corner of the courtyard. The basement door is an original stile and rail door with one panel and one light. The interior walls of the basement are triple wythe brick masonry and the floor is concrete. The ceiling is the exposed floor structure above which is constructed of a reinforced six inch thick concrete slab with eight inch by eight inch concrete beams at three feet on center.

The interior of the Administration Building consists of a series of offices, storage rooms, a laboratory, and two small restrooms. All of the floors are built of concrete slabs, and the ceilings, where exposed, are plaster on metal lath. The interior surfaces of the adobe walls are plastered with a smooth trowelled finish. A centrally located room, originally used as offices, separates the north and south wings. It is accessed by the main entrance on the east facade, and by the primary courtyard entrance. The north and south interior walls of the room are built of adobe bricks, 12 inches thick. They also function as bearing walls that support portions of the roof framing. Originally 18 feet deep by 30 feet wide, the room has since been divided by a wood stud and plaster partition wall.

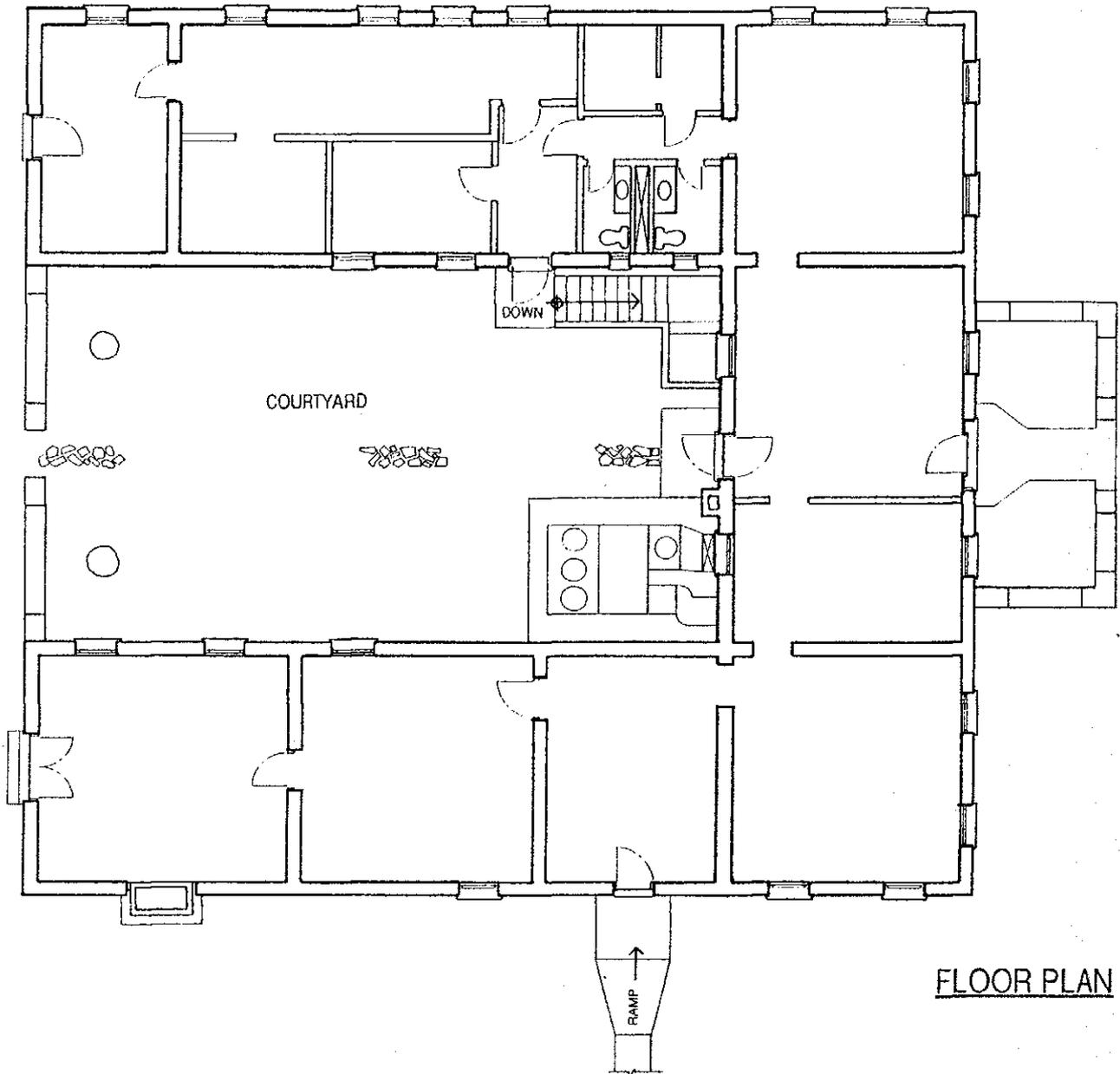
The south wing of the building is divided into four rooms. Their original functions are unknown. Each room is separated by a 12 inch thick adobe brick wall. The rooms are spacious, with the largest measuring 20 feet by 18 feet, and the smallest 14 feet by 18 feet. The interior wall finishes of these rooms are concealed by furred out sheet panelling. With the exception of the original interior door of the westernmost room, all other doors have been replaced with flush wood doors.

The north wing of the building contains offices, a laboratory, storage rooms, and restrooms. A large 18 foot square office is situated at the east end of the wing. It is separated from a pair of restrooms and a storage room by an original 12 inch thick adobe brick partition wall. The original laboratory is located in the central portion of the north wing and is 31 feet long. An early wood stud and plaster partition wall separates the laboratory from two offices on the south. The west end of the wing contains a single room, 10 feet deep by 18 feet wide, that is separated from the laboratory by an original adobe brick partition wall. Aside from the partition walls, the five panel wood doors of the restrooms, storage room and laboratory are original. The laboratory counter is also original.

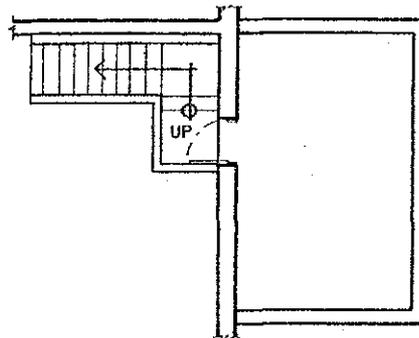
Name / Title: Jim Woodward, Architect

Affiliation: Woodward Architectural Group

Date: December 15, 1993



FLOOR PLAN



BASEMENT PLAN

